3rd Sunday after Pentecost June 10, 2018

Second Sunday after the Trinity Propers 5 (10)

Year B – the Gospel of Mark

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

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https://steadfastlutherans.org/2015/06/different-opinions-about-jesus-and-his-followers-sermon-on-mark-320-35-by-pr-charles-henrickson/

Hymn of the Day

<u>Lutheran Service Book</u> (LSB) 668 <u>The Lutheran Hymnal</u> (TLH) 444

"Rise! To Arms! With prayer employ you"

Seven hymnals, almost all Lutheran and only one melody, "Wachet auf" which you know better as "Wake, awake, for night is falling", (LSB 516, TLH, 609).

Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608, wrote the melody for this hymn. He was deeply involved in the theological arguments of his time, especially with the views of Calvinism. "...In Hamburg Nicolai was universally esteemed, was a most popular and influential preacher, and was regarded as a "pillar" of the Lutheran church. In his private life he seems to have been most lovable and estimable. Besides his fame as a preacher, his reputation rests mainly on his hymns. His printed works are mostly polemical, often very violent and acrid in tone, and such as the undoubted sincerity of his zeal to preserve pure and unadulterated Lutheranism may explain, but cannot be said to justify. Of his hymns only four seem to have been printed..."

The title of the tune "is a reversed acrostic, W. Z. G. for the Graf zu Waldeck, viz. his former pupil Count Wilhelm Ernst, who died at Tübingen Sept. 16, 1598, in his fifteenth year. It seems to have been written in 1597 at Unna, in Wesphalia, where Nicolai was then pastor; and during the terrible pestilence which raged there from July, 1597, to January, 1598, to which in July 300, in one week in August 170, and in all over 1300 fell victims. Nicolai's parsonage overlooked the churchyard, and there daily interments took place, often to the number of thirty. In these days of distress, when every household was in mourning, Nicolai's thoughts turned to Death, and thence to God in Heaven, and to the Eternal Fatherland. In the preface (dated Aug. 10, 1598) to his Frewden-Spiegel he says: "There seemed to me nothing more sweet, delightful and agreeable, than the contemplation of the noble, sublime doctrine of Eternal Life obtained through the Blood of Christ..." Read more of his biography at:

- https://hymnary.org/person/Nicolai P
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv3fXIR8V9Q Recognize the melody? Christian Hymn Series Topic Hymns of the Church Militant
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhQy2Cgybi4 Join St. John, LCMS, Hubbard Iowa
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvweJ1lLcZc And if you let Bach get ahold of it... "The organ Chorale of J.S. Bach, "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (BWV 645), performed by Rodney Gehrke on the Flentrop organ from All Saints Episcopal Church in Palo Alto, California...Rodney Gehrke "

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, <u>English Standard Version</u> **(ESV)** Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Genesis 3:8-15; Revised Common Lectionary, (RCL), the same reading or 1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15), 16-20, (11:14-15) (Next week: Ezekiel 17:22-24; RCL, the same reading or 1 Samuel 15:34-16:3)

"Reading the Genesis 3 text in light of Jesus' confrontations with people who thought he was "out of his mind," focuses our attention on expectations about the relationships between God and humans, and humans and creation.*

From the beginning of this scene -- before we arrive at the articulated differences between God and the humans -- we hear an astonishing aspect of their relationship. The first sentence tells us that the Lord God walks in the garden. God has come to the place where people are living. It is a pleasant scene in which God walks in the evening breeze without a hint of what seems a bitter denunciation to come. God seeking-out-creation governs the action..."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2496 Melinda Quivik Liturgical and Homiletical Scholar, Houghton, Mich.



⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool^[a] of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

"Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring[c] and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

- a. Genesis 3:8 Hebrew wind
- b. Genesis 3:9 In Hebrew you is singular in verses 9 and 11
- c. Genesis 3:15 Hebrew seed; so throughout Genesis

By leaving out verses 16-24, many of the commentaries do not stop at 15, but continue to talk about marriage. Terence Fretheim, offers a commentary that is very detailed, examining the nature of the "story" and how it fits the rest of scripture. You may not agree with all the points presented, but accept the challenge to read the entire article and judge for yourself.

http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/14-2 Genesis/14-2 Fretheim.pdf Terence Fretheim, the author of the Genesis commentary in the New Interpreter's Bible,

"...Adam and Eve -- and it is crucial to note that while Eve is the one who speaks, both are present throughout the scene (Genesis 3:6) -- are similarly invited to mistrust God. Interestingly, the serpent doesn't actually lie to Adam and Eve -- they do not die; they do become more like God as God acknowledges. Rather, the serpent calls into question God's trustworthiness by suggesting that there is more to the story than God let on. In this way the serpent sows the seeds of mistrust, inviting Adam and Eve to fulfill the deep want and need that is at the core of being human not through their relationship with God but by seizing the fruit that is in front of them. It is the temptation to be self-sufficient, to establish their identity on their own, that seduces the first humans.

Identity is again the focus of the Tempter in the scene of Jesus' temptation. "If you are the Son of God," Satan begins. In other words, "How do you know you are God's Son?" Hence the core of the temptation: "Wouldn't it be better to know for certain? Turn stone to bread, jump from the Temple, worship me...and you will never know doubt again. You will know. You will be sufficient on your own." The temptation is the same, but Jesus responds by refusing to establish his own worth and identity on his own terms but instead remains dependent on God. Jesus knows who he is, that is, by remembering whose he is.

Might it be that a part of being human is being aware that we are insufficient, that we are not complete in and of ourselves, that lack is a permanent part of our condition? To be human, in other words, is to be aware that we carry inside ourselves a hole, an emptiness that we will always be restless to fill. Adam and Eve behold the fruit and conclude in a heartbeat that their hole is shaped just like that fruit. Yet after they eat, the emptiness remains. Today we might imagine that hole to be shaped just like a new car, or computer, or better house, or the perfect spouse...

Perhaps faith, that is, doesn't do away with the hardships that are part and parcel of this life, but rather gives us the courage to stand amid them, not simply surviving but actually flourishing in and through Jesus, the one who was tempted as we are and thereby knows our struggles first hand. This same Jesus now invites us to find both hope and courage in the God who named not only him, but all of us, beloved children so that we, also, might discover who we are be recalling whose we are."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=902
 David Lose Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church Minneapolis, Minn.

Psalm 130; RCL, the same Psalm or Psalm 138 (*Psalm 1; RCL, Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15 or Psalm 20*)

"Psalm 130, best known by its Latin incipit De Profundis, "Out of the Depths," has inspired church musicians for centuries, usually in the context of a Requiem Mass.

One need only mention Johan Sebastian Bach's magnificent cantata Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir (BWV 131) inspired by Luther's 1523 paraphrase, Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir,

for corroboration. A cursory check, however, reveals that no fewer than thirty-six other works by major composers such as Mozart, Handel, Mendelssohn, and Schoenberg could also be cited.

Psalm 130 has obviously played a major role in the Catholic and evangelical piety of the Western Church. But what accounts for this popularity? One reason may be its association with a sub-group of the Psalter known since the days of Augustine (354--439 CE) as the Penitential Psalms (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). These psalms often express deep sorrow for sin and ask God for help and forgiveness. Psalm 130 encourages fervent prayer to God (verse 1) the source of forgiveness to those who wait for the Lord (verses 4-6)..." (continued after the reading)

My Soul Waits for the Lord *A Song of Ascents.*

130 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!
 O Lord, hear my voice!
 Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

- If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.
- I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.
- O Israel, hope in the LORD!
 For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.
 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

"...Our psalm is also part of a collection of psalms known as the "Songs of Ascents" (Psalms 120--134). Though this is the clearest example of a collection in the Psalter, due to their common superscription "a song of (Psalm 121: "for") ascents," and the only one that includes the constitutive psalms in a self-contained unit, the function of the collection as a whole continues to baffle interpreters. Not that proposals are in short supply! These range from a prayer book for devotional use on pilgrimages to the three prescribed annual festivals, to liturgical usage at specific Jewish festivals such as Booths, and the Mishnah's suggestion of assigning one of the fifteen psalms to each of the fifteen steps in the Jerusalem temple (Ezekiel 40:26, 31) where the Levites supposedly sang their praises.

Then again, perhaps the "steps" refer to a poetic trope found often in these psalms, the staircase, terraced, or step-like repetition of words from previous verses (in our psalm "my soul

waits" appears in verses 5 and 6; "I hope/O Israel hope" appears in verses 5 and 7; "those who watch for the morning" appears in verse 6b; and "redeem" appears in verses 7 and 8; the trope also appears in Psalm 121--123; 126--127; 129--130; 133). Others, noticing that in addition to "ascent," or "step" *ma'alah* can also refer to the exiles' journey back from captivity in Babylon (Ezra 2:1; 7:9), have drawn plausible connections to the exiles returning to Jerusalem.

...the structure of the psalm is fairly straightforward falling into four two-line sections: An Appeal for Yahweh's Attention (1-2); Trust in Yahweh's Desire to Forgive (3-4); Hopeful Expectation (5-6); and Address to the Community (7-8). Following the initial appeal in verses 1-2, a concentric pattern stitches the psalm together and argues for the originality of verses 7-8 against those who would omit them:

A "Iniquities" (3)
B "For ("But," NRSV) with you" (4)
C "my soul waits" (5)
C' "my soul waits" (6)
B' "For with the Lord" (7)
A' "Iniquities" (8)...

It is usually best to take rhetorical questions in Hebrew as expressions of absolute confidence. The theological basis for such confidence is proclaimed in verse 4 along with the divine motivation, "that you (Yahweh) may be revered." This confidence in God stirs the psalmist to express his eager anticipation of God's response (verse 5-6). Finally, moved by his own sense of forgiveness, the psalmist encourages the community (and us!) to bring that which is troubling them to the Lord in the certain hope that they will find a gracious, loving God, intent on their redemption (verses 7-8)."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1232
 Mark Throntveit Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; RCL, the same reading (2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (11-17); RCL, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17)

The Epistle (2nd Reading) will continue from 2 Corinthians through July 8.

"To read 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 solely as a summary of Paul's views on the body, as is often the case, would be a distortion of its powerful passage.

Rather, this text serves as a demonstration of Paul's certitude in God's power.

Within the context, Paul's words illustrate his profound faith in God's salvific acts. For a God who can defeat death itself, frail mortal bodies are no challenge to God's power. Instead, God demonstrates God's power in choosing mere mortals to bear witness to divine glory. With so great a God working among the Corinthians, there is no need to allow the sufferings of the present age to deter them from testifying to God's new creation..."

 ¹³ Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self^[a] is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

a. 2 Corinthians 4:16 Greek man

Our Heavenly Dwelling

5 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

"There's no two ways about it: Paul's second letter to the folks in Corinth can be tough to read. When Paul is not ranting and raving against his "super apostle" foes who have been badmouthing him up one side of the street and down the other, Paul also makes it clear that he himself has endured a bevy of woes, travails, beatings, and that mysterious thorn in the flesh too. Back in his celebrated Pharisee phase Saul's star had been in the ascendant and no small amount of various perquisites and other pleasant things attended that rise.

But ever since the Jesus whose name Saul had been trying to wipe from the face of the earth had met Saul in a blinding flash of transformation, Saul-turned-Paul's star for Jesus had also been rising but in this case the results were anything but perks. The world roughed up and killed Jesus, after all, and as Jesus himself had promised his followers, it would keep doing the same to them. "Tell me about it" would doubtless have been Paul's reply to that promised persecution.

All of which brings us to 2 Corinthians 4 and the first few verses of chapter 5 (the Lectionary includes only 2 Corinthians 5:1 in this reading but that's almost like stopping in midsentence so go ahead and include verses 2-5 while you're at it). If the Apostle Paul had been one of the world's first "bi-vocational pastors," then we know that his day job was tent-making. And so unsurprisingly in 2 Corinthians 5 he reaches for a tent metaphor when describing what was going on to his physical body (and the bodies of also his roughed-up apostolic colleagues).

"My outward tent is wasting away" Paul writes, seemingly without complaint. "The fabric is torn, rain gets in, the more vibrant color of the original tent fabric long ago faded away to now some dull gray, pale looking thing. I've lost half my tent pegs and two of the supporting cord ropes have frayed to almost nothing. One strong gust of wind could knock this old tent down to a flattened mess."

All things being equal, this sounds like the rhetoric of a defeated man. But "defeat" is a far cry from Paul's tone here. Yes, yes, it is at least as bad as Paul describes it here but yet he is able to dismiss all that as "a light and momentary affliction." Really?! Sounds miserable enough to me. How can Paul keep his chin up, keep going, carry on for the kingdom of God when his earthly tent is in undeniable tatters? Because through Christ Jesus he knows a larger truth: there

is a divine Tentmaker who is even now designing and fashioning something quite wonderful for us all. This earthly tent is not the end of the story. Not by a long shot...

Whenever we preach, we inevitably address people in our congregations who are keenly aware of the wasting away of the earthly tent. It may not be—as it was for Paul—primarily due to persecution... More likely it is the 70-year-old man who realizes that he is not just having trouble remembering names anymore as a part of normal aging—no, sometimes he has to work harder than is typical to figure out if he is even supposed to know that person who just came up to him in the supermarket for a chat or not...

Few people need a preacher to convince them that our earthly tents waste away in one form or another. What they need is the Gospel word that their doctors and therapists and home health care providers cannot provide: the Good News about that weight of glory that cannot be dislodged from inside these sagging old tents. The Good News that there is a master Tentmaker who is even now sewing and stitching something together for each one of us—something quite extraordinary..."

http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-5b-2/?type=lectionary epistle Scott Hoezee

THE MARK CHALLENGE

Ready for Chapter 8? Actually it's Chapter 9 this month. Chapter 8 was part of last month.

Mark 3:20-35; RCL, the same reading (Mark 4:26-34; RCL, the same reading)

"If you're looking for snapshots of well-adjusted and happy parent-child relationships from the ancient world, the Bible probably shouldn't be on your short list of sources. Consider even Jesus' family, for example. The New Testament preserves evidence suggesting that Jesus' relationship with his mother was rather strained. Similar tensions appear to have existed between him and his siblings, as well.

An important source is Mark 3:21, which says: "When his family heard what was happening, they came to take control of him. They were saying, 'He's out of his mind!" (translation: Common English Bible).

Yet, Christian tradition has had a difficult time reckoning with the perhaps troubling idea of family strife between Jesus and his kin. Consider what translators and even other Gospel authors have done with Mark 3:21:

The King James Version totally removes Jesus' family from this part of the scene, saying: "And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, 'He is beside himself.'"

The New Revised Standard Version puts the disparagement of Jesus in the mouths of others, saying: "When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.'"

The authors of the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, whose books were produced after the Gospel according to Mark and who included scenes similar to Mark 3:20-35, omitted from their narratives any suggestion that Jesus' family thought he was crazy.

The story told in the wider context, <u>Mark 3:20-35</u>, sets Jesus' family in comparison to influential religious leaders (legal scholars based in Jerusalem). Both groups express an inability to understand who Jesus really is. The religious authorities conclude he is possessed by Satan. His

family assumes he has lost his sanity. In an ancient setting, these diagnoses were roughly equivalent to each other..."

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-l-skinner/mark-3-20-35-what-makes-a-family b 1573923.html Matt Skinner is Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

"The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 3rd Chapter"

²⁰ Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. ²¹ And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." ²³ And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶ And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. ²⁷ But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

²⁸ "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— ³⁰ for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

³¹ And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. ³² And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers^[a] are outside, seeking you." ³³ And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

a. Mark 3:32 Other manuscripts add and your sisters

"This is the Gospel of the Lord" "Praise to You, O Christ"

There are several ways to approach this reading; a study of the patterns of Mark at work, Beelezabul, and the family of Jesus to name a few. This year I've chosen to focus on Pastor Lose's comments about verses 28-30 – blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.

"These few verses (verses 28-30) have occasioned more consternation, and even fear, among faithful Christians than almost any others in the Bible. They are also among the most challenging to interpret, as few biblical scholars are confident that they know exactly what Jesus means here. (And this may, naturally, have contributed to some of the anxiety!) For this reason,

I think it's worth taking a brief break from our journey through Mark's story of Jesus to reflect briefly on these vexing verses.

Perhaps the thing we should say upfront is that the reason these verses feel rather threatening is because they seem to name one sin – blaspheming the Holy Spirit – that cannot be forgiven. It seems, that is, that there is a possibility that there is something we can do that may put us beyond the pale of God's grace. We therefore – and I think understandably – may want to know exactly what this sin is. So, two things on this count:

- 1) It seems that this sin revolves around rejecting God's good work in Christ as the work of the devil. Failing to recognize God's messiah, rejecting the new revelation of God in Christ, refusing to acknowledge the work of the Spirit of God to renew and redeem creation these are what most scholars think Jesus is naming here. But that doesn't mean it's a one-time slip of the lip or anger in the heart. There's a sense of an on-going rigidity or constant setting-one's-face-against God's activity that seems to be implied. Indeed, the sin Jesus seems to name is an ongoing, even permanent refusal to be open to the movement of the Spirit.
- 2) Which leads to the second important thing to say: You can't sin in this way by accident. In fact, what Jesus is talking about is less something you do an action or word and more of a complete way of being living in utter rejection of God. So if you're at all worried about committing this sin, I can assure you that you haven't.

Finally, we can never underestimate the degree to which these passages were originally intended for a specific audience. Mark, that is, may have told this part of his story about Jesus in order to address a particular concern or question of his community and may not have imagined that 2000 years later we'd be sitting here wondering and worrying about these particular verses. Some verses are harder to interpret than others precisely because they are rooted in the questions and context of a particular community. So while we do well always to be concerned with the meaning of Jesus' sayings, our salvation doesn't rest on getting them exactly right but on God's grace alone.

And with that in mind, let's return to our regularly scheduled trip through Mark's story of Jesus."

http://www.davidlose.net/2012/05/mark-3-28-30/ David Lose Senior Pastor, Mount Olivet Lutheran Church Minneapolis, Minn.



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